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SIPDIS

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TAGS: ECIN PREL EU TU SP

SUBJECT: SPAIN SUPPORTS TURKISH EU ACCESSION

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Classified By: Political Counselor Kathleen Fitzpatrick for Reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Spain supports Turkish EU candidacy, a policy that has remained consistent through both the Popular Party administration of Jose Maria Aznar and the current Socialist administration of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. MFA EU Correspondent Luis Canovas del Castillo told Poloff November 15 that Spain has always seen Turkey's entry into the EU as a positive development. The EU has been expanding northward and eastward, and the GOS would welcome balance in EU expansion with another Mediterranean voice. Enrique Mora Benavente, MFA Head of EU Policy Planning, told Poloff that while other states may say they support Turkey's entrance into the EU and offer only tepid support, Spain strongly supports Turkey's candidacy.

¶2. (C) Although the current government of Spain favors Turkish accession to the EU, the issue is not its highest EU priority. Canovas believes that questions concerning Turkish accession talks may be frozen until the EU Constitution has passed in several nations. A strong and functioning European Commission is also a priority of many EU member states. Canovas said he would not be surprised if either Cyprus or Greece added conditions to Turkish accession, such as the settlement of the Cyprus problem as a condition of entry.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: Spain supports Turkish entry into the EU and would vote in favor of Turkish accession today. The GOS does not appear wedded to any particular timetable for Turkish accession and could be influenced by considerations from other EU members. Targeted U.S. actions would unlikely change Spain's position, as they are already in favor of Turkish entry into the EU, but Spain's major EU allies, France and Germany, could possibly influence Spain's thinking towards any particular timetable for Turkish accession. END
COMMENT
ARGYROS